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Testimony*

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The Deputy Director

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

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Honorable James Abourezk, Chairman
Subcommittee on Administrative Practice
and Procedure
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

At the hearing held by your Subcommittee on Friday, 16 September 1977, my colleague, Mr. Anthony Lapham, and I promised to provide you with the answers to certain questions and with certain materials which were not available at that time. Subsequent to the hearing, Subcommittee staff have informally requested additional information.

The enclosures to this letter contain some of the information requested. We hope to provide the remainder within the next week. With respect to certain classified affidavits made in two court cases, I propose to provide this material to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence where it will be available for the use of your Subcommittee members. This will obviate the need for any special arrangements for the protection of this material. I hope this arrangement will be acceptable to you and other members of your Subcommittee.

I am also at this time returning a corrected copy of the portion of the transcript containing the testimony of Mr. Lapham and me. In this respect there is one matter which I believe needs further elaboration. In the course of my appearance before your Subcommittee you asked for my definition of a "blind memo" and when and how it might be used. My testimony accurately describes my understanding of the use of the term.

Nevertheless, I believe the record should show that there is no commonly accepted definition of this art form. It can and does mean different things to different people. For example:

a. An analyst might prepare a blind memo recording his analysis of an event which could subsequently be forwarded by him or his superior under a covering memorandum to various addressees.

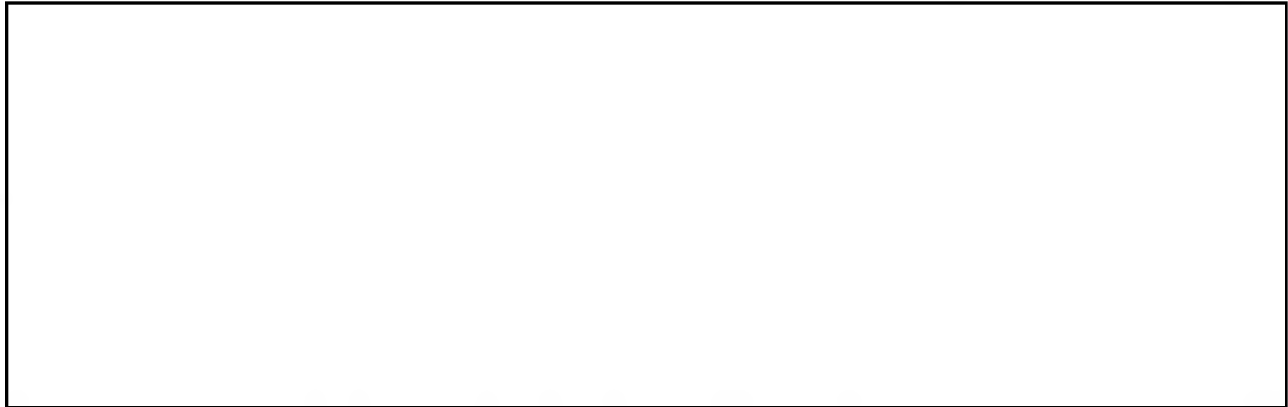
b. An operations officer might review an operational file and summarize in a blind memo the significant facts and status of the operation as of a given date. In most cases, this would be routinely reviewed by a supervisor, and then simply inserted in the file. Normally, a routing slip would show who originated the memo and who reviewed it.

These are but a few illustrations of situations in which CIA-prepared papers might be referred to as blind memos. It is quite possible--in fact not unlikely--that such papers on occasion end up in Agency files without markings or attachments identifying the originators or intended recipients.

The point which I made during my testimony, however, remains valid. It is not accepted practice in CIA, nor does the Agency condone the use of blind memos as a means of avoiding responsibility on the part of the originator. In the course of the inquiries I have conducted subsequent to my testimony, I have found no one who is aware that such practices exist today or have existed in the past.

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I hope these answers and arrangements meet with your approval.

Sincerely,

/s/John F. Blake

John F. Blake
Acting Deputy Director

Enclosures

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